

The Watchman and Southron.

THE SUMTER WATCHMAN, Established April, 1850.

"Be Just and Fear not—Let all the Ends thou Aims't at, be thy Country's, thy God's and Truth's."

THE TRUE SOUTHRON, Established June, 1846.

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Putting on Whitewash.

Administration Exonerates Spaniards in Advance of Report from Court of Inquiry.

Washington, March 1.—The main interest of the day in connection with the Maine inquiry centered in a statement by Secretary Long, following the cabinet meeting, that in his personal opinion any official participation by the Spanish government in the blowing up of the Maine was now practically eliminated from the situation. This statement was not of a formal or official character and was made by Mr. Long as he walked away from the White House.

As usual, the various cabinet officers were besieged with inquiries as to the questions before meeting and in response to these importunities the secretary rather casually summed up the situation in a few words, stating that most of the time had been given to the outrages of colored postmasters in the south. Naturally the Cuban situation had been gone over, he said, but there were no actual developments and he felt that public excitement over the subject had materially abated. Then he added the statement, in the same passing way, that any participation by the Spanish government in the blowing up of the Maine was practically eliminated, in his judgment. This last remark was speedily given wide circulation apart from the quieting references which had accompanied it. It immediately started much comment and discussion, and when Mr. Long returned to the navy department after lunch he found that what he had intended to convey was being given the force of an official declaration that Spain's responsibility for the disaster had been eliminated. In order to make clear his meaning, as a personal expression, Mr. Long dictated the following statement:

"The main thing we talked about in cabinet were the outrages on the postmasters, one a white man in Georgia and one a colored man in South Carolina."

"In regard to the Cuban question, I said I thought things were growing quiet every day, and as my judgment went I was inclined to think that any official participation on the part of the Spanish government in the disaster was now practically eliminated."

WEIGHING HIS WORDS

The foregoing conveyed all that Mr. Long desired to say on the subject, and this much was given only to offset enlarged versions of what he had said. Persons occupying the closest relations with the secretary said that the opinion expressed was such as any one might give with the facts now at hand. It was not in any sense, it was explained, a conclusion drawn from new evidence, not made public, either from the court of inquiry or any officer now concerned in the inquiry. Neither the facts nor intimations have come from such sources, it is said at the department, which would serve as the basis for an opinion. The official declaration of Senator DuBose, the Spanish charge d'affaires, that no mines or submarine defenses exist in the harbor of Havana had come to the attention of Secretary Long and this statement from the authorized representative of the Spanish government was felt to have been given due weight in the opinion expressed by the secretary. It was pointed out by persons bearing close relations to the secretary that the language used was "official participation" on the part of the Spanish government. This, it was said, had no bearing on the question of Spain's responsibility. The "official participation" of Spain was one thing, while the responsibility of Spain, in case the disaster proved to be of external origin, was quite another thing. The secretary's statement was restricted, it was explained, to exculpating Spain from direct, official knowledge and participation in the affair. In case it was shown that the act was due to some fanatic or person unconnected with the government, then the question of Spain's responsibility would be still open. Mr. Long was much surprised that so much attention had been given to his passing allusion.

Aside from this incident the day brought forth few developments of im-

portance relating to the Maine. No dispatches of any character from Key West, where the court of inquiry is sitting, were given out during the day and as the rule of publicity is still in force, presumably nothing came from that quarter. The vessel movements announced during the day were devoid of significance.

A Sub-Marine Mine.

Naval Officers Incline to This Idea Now.

Havana, via Key West, Fla., March 2.—Without adding unnecessarily to the flood of surmises, conjecture and prophecy concerning the finding of the court of inquiry, it is fair to say that, as a matter of fact, most of the naval officers here and at Key West incline to the opinion that the court will find that the disaster to the Maine was caused by the explosion of a floating sub-marine mine under the forward portside of the ship. Opinions differ as to whether this mine was made of high explosives, such as wet and dry gun cotton or ordinary gun-powder.

Opinions agree, not only as to the existence of mines in the harbor, but that this one was laid purposely near the bay where foreign war vessels were directed to moor and was fired by a flash from an electric battery on shore.

It is believed barely possible that the explosion of the mine was the result of the carelessness or ignorance of Spanish officials in charge of the mine station keys, when testing the circuit, but the latter supposition is not felt to be probable. It is further regarded as settled by the evidence before the court, that the portside of the hull forward was completely blown to pieces, and that the only explosion on the Maine, except of isolated cases of fixed ammunition, was that of two thousand pounds of saluting powder, stored forward and of which no trace can be found.

These views are gathered from officers who talk with great reserve, and only upon the assurance that their identity will never be revealed. The fact remains that only the members of the court of inquiry know all the testimony elicited and no one is authorized to make public matter in advance of the final judgment.

A good deal of surprise was expressed by Americans here at learning that Spanish divers were to be permitted to make an examination of the wreck of the Maine, especially as it was also said that American naval officers here would give such divers all consistent facilities and would throw no obstacles in the way of thorough submarine inspection. It was not at first understood as it came to be later, that the Spanish search was to be entirely independent and that while it was being made the American investigation would proceed under Captain Sigbee's supervision. As understood here the Spanish request made immediately after the disaster for a joint investigation was promptly refused at Washington, but after a cabinet consultation, it was agreed that the Spaniards had a moral and international right to discover the cause of the wreck for themselves if possible. Therefore permission for an independent examination was granted on the ground, as understood here, that it could not be refused to a friendly power in her own harbor. That the permission was not accorded until after the court of inquiry had finished its work here and gone to Key West is regarded as significant. It opens a wide field for speculation.

HAS NO OBJECTION

Some assert that the court now has no objection to a Spanish inquiry for one of two reasons: Either the court has sufficient evidence already of accident or malice—evidence that cannot be controverted by the Spaniards—or after a diligent search, the mystery remains as deep as ever and the court does not think the Spaniards will reach a conclusion where the Americans have failed. Of course all this refers principally to inspection of parts of the ship other than the hull. Until the guns, decks, engines and debris of all kinds have been removed and the mud has been pumped from the hull it cannot be examined thoroughly by any one. Some good authorities think it will be necessary to build a coffer dam around the wreck, piles being driven, etc.

That any important testimony before the court has found its way to the public is very unlikely. Some of the witnesses have told certain correspondents of alleged testimony, but in every case investigation has showed their stories to be widely improbable and controverted by known facts or else absolutely irrelevant. Some of the correspondents have tried to extract information from members of the court or from naval witnesses by putting what were deemed by the questioners clever hypothetical interrogatories. But the questioners were not experts in naval architecture and the questioned were. So the results were unsatisfactory. Probably the court knew before it left Havana for Key West whether the top-inch magazine on the starboard forward did

or did not explode, but the members gave no sign and the divers when they talked at all, doubtless even the contractors for the removal of the inner debris and the raising of the hull, do not fully appreciate the difficulties to be encountered. Certainly the tug Right Arm has been of little value thus far, her captain not having sufficient authority until Monday to employ the necessary help or to hire the needed lighters.

DIFFICULT WORK.

While criticizing the naval divers for their slowness, it must be remembered that theirs is grim, dangerous and difficult work. In muddy, foul water, through a mass of riven steel, bent iron, shattered gratings and ladders, over upturned hatches, heaped up coal, scattered ammunition, guns, chests, machinery and electric wires, they must make out their way. They must exercise great care lest their air tubes be severed by sharp projections. Already many have had falls in the uncertain light and difficult passages.

Nothing need be retracted, however, from the statement that all the haste possible is greatly to be desired. The huge weight of the wreck caused it to sink daily deeper into the soft mud of the harbor, making the task of raising the vessel the more Herculean.

While no outsider is allowed on the wreck, the patrol lines are not so rigid as formerly, and the boats of visitors are allowed to sail close to the upheaved mass of debris.

Work is Completed.

That is as Far as Key West is Concerned.

Key West, Fla., March 2.—The fact is becoming more evident, as the days pass, that any information direct from members of the United States court of inquiry into the loss of the battleship Maine, and from those appearing before it, is guarded with unusual closeness. Practically no information presented to the court has been disclosed. The restrictions are so severe that the communications between the naval men who have been before the court have been most guarded.

Naval officers at this station who are connected with the court express the guarded view that very little testimony has yet been heard tending to show that the explosion was the result of a conspiracy or as to the exact cause of the disaster.

Ten enlisted men were examined by the board this forenoon as was also Commander Forsyth. It is understood he gave testimony regarding the hoaling of the battleship at the navy yard here.

The court of inquiry convened shortly after 2 o'clock and went out to the barracks where all the survivors of the Maine were mustered. The men were asked if they had any charges or further statements to make. Not a word came from the ranks, and after a whispered consultation, the work of the court of inquiry at Key West came to an end.

Judge Advocate Marix, in reply to an inquiry said that so far as he knew the court has no more work to do at Key West. They are waiting instructions through Rear Admiral Sigsbee from Washington as to whether they shall return at once to Havana. Apparently the court has gained little information during the Key West session which could help explain the explosion.

Captain Sigbee is one of the few American naval officers who possesses a decoration given by a European monarch. In 1882 congress passed a joint resolution authorizing him to accept a decoration of the order of the Red Eagle, which had been tendered to him by the emperor of Germany in recognition of his services to the German navy in superintending the construction of a deep sea sounding machine invented by himself and considered by the German government to be the best in the world.—Augusta Chronicle.

War Note Sounded.

The Spanish Bullies Think That America is Afraid of Them and So Publish Their Opinions.

(Correspondence of the Associated Press.) Madrid, Feb. 17.—Fierce indignation characterizes the Spanish papers that are not supporters of the government at its alleged weakness in replying to gentle terms to the American demand for explanations about the Dupuy D'Orne letter.

The Imparcial says: "It is the height of weakness to suppose we are going to disarm the Yankees by means of patience. From them we shall gain nothing by it, and on the other hand we shall lose the esteem for the dignity and bravery of Spain, obtained from the other nations. Paraphrasing the never-to-be-forgotten Spartan words of Menendez Nunez at Callan, 'Suffer it to say Spain loves honor

more without Cuba than Cuba without honor."

"We have sacrificed our youth, we have sacrificed our millions. Must we also sacrifice our national honor? Not the great Antilla, not a hundred Antilles would be worth so great a sacrifice."

The Imparcial then proceeds to argue that all Spain's concessions will be useless if the United States really seeks to break off friendly relations, adding: "If a pretext is sought, it will be found, for instance a hostile demonstration against the Spanish war ships visiting American ports, or a demand for a pension for the widow of the dentist Ruiz."

"In Europe," the article continues, "every one has already perceived this. The universal conscience is with us and it is really a shameful fact that the action of the United States rouses more indignation in foreign minds than in some Spanish. We believe we interpret better the spirit of the Spanish people, and we energetically protest against what has been done, in order that outside of Spain it may be known that her rulers do not reflect the feelings of the Spanish people in such acts as the explanation to McKinley, and also that this nation of brave men has not become a flock of lambs."

The Correo Espanol, after recapitulating all the injuries it alleges that Spain has suffered at the hands of the United States, says:

"The last affair—that of Dupuy D'Orne—has given the measure of our decay and sufferings. Any other government than that we endure—ancient monarchies and the men—when drawing up the note in yesterday's council in reply to the inadmissible, uncalculated, and ruffianly demands of the president of the republic of the United States, would have accompanied it with Mr. Woodford's passports. For it is clear that neither concessions nor the humiliations of the Spanish government change in the slightest degree the plan drawn up by the American government and people. They want war, and war will come."

The Pais is not so moderate, for it declares that war is already raging. (es ya declarada), saying:

"The North Americans have not their soldiers, their ships, in Cuba, but among the insurgents they have what is better, they have their money turned into ammunition, guns, cannon and dynamite."

"Why," asked the Pais, should an official declaration be made when war already exists, and exists under the most favorable terms for the United States? An official declaration might alarm the European powers, who would not tolerate McKinley placing his hand on the Antilles. Instead of exposing their soldiers on their own soil, they send them in the guise of insurgents to Cuba. To avoid a catastrophe to their warships, they send men and ammunition to the insurgents in merchant vessels. American politicians would indeed be most foolish if they abandoned by a declaration of war, the favorable position they have taken up in Cuba against Spain.

"No," the paper continues, "we cannot hope for a declaration of war. Cautious or bold, humble or active, our government need not fear that Washington will declare war. It is already declared. Already it has caused havoc in Spain and in the United States they laugh at the idea that they are capable of the folly of declaring war against us, a war already aflame through them, a war fed by them, a war in which they run none of the risks and have all the advantages that would accrue from an open war between the two countries."

A Credit to the Nation.

More than two weeks have elapsed since the startling intelligence that the United States battleship Maine had been blown up and destroyed in Havana harbor was made known to the public.

The awful event so shocked the people of the United States that for awhile people and officials were dazed by its enormity, and the nation was given up to mourning and breathless interest in the names of the lost and wounded.

Shortly afterward stories came thick and fast that the battleship and more than 250 of its crew had been destroyed by treachery. With every evidence of verity the correspondents at Havana related with circumstantial detail how the work of havoc had been wrought by a submarine mine over which the Maine was placed by a Spanish pilot acting under orders of a Spanish admiral—in times of peace.

Since that time the information has come that there were no mines in the harbor of Havana, and the same correspondents are now telling the people that the havoc was wrought by a floating torpedo.

In the meantime a court of inquiry composed of distinguished officers of the American navy has been engaged in making a complete and thorough investigation of the wreck and the causes which brought it about.

The administration has suspended judgment, so have both houses of con-

gress, and to the great credit of the people of the United States the same can now be truthfully said of them.

This despite the greatest provocation it is undoubtedly true that a majority of the American people believe that the Maine was destroyed by design. This belief has been added to, if not played upon by sensational dispatches to more than sensational newspapers.

But through it all the people have displayed a calmness worthy of the people of a great and powerful nation, like ours.

This deliberation is indicative of no lack of feeling of resentment, or through fear of consequences, but it is directly attributable to the fact that the people of this country are above all things else—fair.

When the facts are all known, as they soon must be, the temper of the people will be such that the proper course is almost certain to be carried out.

It is doubtful if in any other country on the civilized globe the people would have acted with such conspicuous fairness and deliberation.

Imagine the attitude of the French people under similar circumstances. The streets of Paris would have long since run red with the blood of soldiers endeavoring to check the riotous demonstrations of an enthusiastic but hysterical people.

If the Viscaya, the Spanish warship, had met with a similar fate to the Maine's in New York harbor, the cables would have been laden the day following with accounts of riots in Barcelona and Madrid. The American minister's and consuls' residences would have been attacked, and the overthrow of the government itself would be dangerously near, if war were not declared.

Even the calculating Britishers and the phlegmatic Teutons would have demanded immediate demonstrations of force.

But the American people, as jealous of their honor as any more conscious of their strength than all, as patriotic and devoted, as enthusiastic and as brave, can afford to await the facts.

Long and severe lessons have taught them that the advice of the frontier sage—"Be sure you are right—then go ahead"—was wise and sound.

Acting upon this theory no mistake can be made.—Atlanta Journal.

Saw Nothing in Armenia to Equal the Want and Famine Witnessed in Cuba.

New York, March 3.—W. W. Howard of this city returned from Cuba to-day on the steamship Vigilance.

"I was in Armenia with Clara Burton," said Mr. Howard, "but no where in Armenia did I see such suffering and famine as I have witnessed in Cuba among the pacificos and reconcentrados. Men, women and children are so emaciated from privation that their ribs and bones almost come through higher shriveled skins. If ever people needed relief it is those wretched reconcentrados."

"The insurgents are well dressed, well armed, well horsed and well groomed—indeed they are sleek, and live easy lives. Cuba has been laid waste. Outside the towns one rarely sees a building, for the reason that all buildings in the country have been razed or burned. Grass and weeds grow where once the highest cultivation existed."

Mr. Howard said that he was on the wharf at Hbana when the Maine blew up. He heard two explosions, a dull one followed by a louder one which shook the ground and nearly stunned him.

J. J. Murphy, another passenger on the Vigilance, said, "I am positive that there were two explosions. The first one was somewhat muffled, but the second was stunning in its loudness."

A Big Thing for Due West.

Due West, March 3.—A telegram has just been received from the Hon. W. Jennings Bryan, stating that he will lecture in Due West on Friday afternoon or night, March 11. Subject of lecture, "Bimetallism." Admission 40 cents, the proceeds to be shared with the literary societies of Erskine College.

Mr. Bryan was invited to make the anniversary address at the commencement in June, but finding it inconvenient to be in Due West at that time, has arranged to come at the time mentioned above.

Due West expects ten thousand visitors to be present on the occasion. Arrangements will be made with Southern Railway to run excursion trains and ample facilities will be provided to convey passengers to and from the trains at Donald's.

Reading, Pa., March 3.—Beginning next Monday the Carpenter Steel Works will go on double turn, working on projectiles for the Government and employing three hundred and fifty instead of two hundred and twenty-five hands.

Meeting of State Board of Control.

Dispenser in Trouble.

Three New Distillery Permits. Mr. Shore's Application Laid Over.

The state board of control has taken no action on the resolution passed by the general assembly to the effect that the granting of hotel privileges is contrary to spirit of the dispensary law. When the resolution was read at the meeting yesterday morning the motion to receive it as information passed without the least discussion. This resolution was introduced by Mr. Kibler, passed the house unanimously and had but seven votes recorded against it in the senate.

Distillery privileges were granted Messrs. J. H. Green, J. P. Hall and H. A. Batson, of Bates township, in Greenville county. Shortly after this was done State Superintendent of Education Mayfield appeared before the board and asked to file a protest as these gentlemen lived within a less distance from churches and school-houses than prescribed by law. The board decided to instruct the distillers that the privileges were granted on condition that the business be removed at least two miles from a church or school house as demanded by the law. One of the members laughingly suggested that the church or school house be moved if necessary for the establishment of a distillery.

The Aiken county board was instructed to locate a sub dispensary at Salley's, in that county.

Dispenser Inspector Hill reported that C. B. Harrison, the dispenser at Bronson, in Hampton county, was in trouble. There was a shortage of \$559 86 in his accounts due to gross criminal carelessness. Harrison has already been removed by the county board of control. The shortage had originally amounted to \$890. He has since paid the inspector \$278, and his bondsmen have refunded \$52 14, leaving \$560 to be paid. The state board has authorized the attorney general to institute proceedings to recover the amount from Harrison's bondsmen.

The board was then engaged until dinner time hearing different whiskey drummers tell of the merits of the beverages manufactured by their respective houses.

In the afternoon while part of the board was engaged in listing the bids from the different establishments, the other half was looking for a house in which to locate the state dispensary should it become necessary or prudent to move it. Their report will be rendered this morning.

The application of Mr. Shores to establish a distillery in Sumter County was laid over for a while at the request of Dispenser Raffield, of Sumter, who said that a counter petition was being circulated in the township where this distillery was to be established.—Register March 2.

The war department has decided to abandon its expedition for the relief of the miners in the Klondike country, because the conclusion has been reached that no necessity exists for it. Secretary Alger has written a letter to Senator Hawley, chairman of the senate committee on military affairs, explaining the department's position and asking that congress take action by joint resolution authorizing the department to dispose of the supplies purchased for the expedition, including the reindeer which have just arrived from Norway, and to abandon the project entirely.

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